

PCTWORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
International Bureau

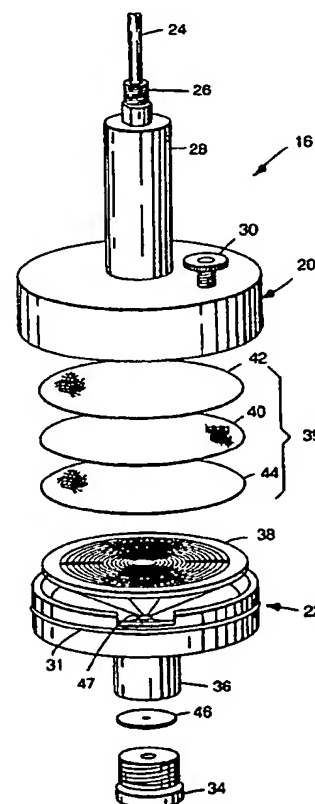
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification ⁵ : B01D 11/04, 61/00		A1	(11) International Publication Number: WO 94/20192
			(43) International Publication Date: 15 September 1994 (15.09.94)
(21) International Application Number: PCT/US94/00472		(81) Designated States: BR, CA, CN, JP, KR, RU, European patent (AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE).	
(22) International Filing Date: 14 January 1994 (14.01.94)			
(30) Priority Data: 08/027,080 5 March 1993 (05.03.93) US		Published <i>With international search report.</i>	
(71) Applicant: MINNESOTA MINING AND MANUFACTURING COMPANY [US/US]; 3M Center, P.O. Box 33427, Saint Paul, MN 55133-3427 (US).			
(72) Inventors: PIEPER, Richard, M.; P.O. Box 33427, Saint Paul, MN 55133-3427 (US). AYSTA, James, E.; P.O. Box 33427, Saint Paul, MN 55133-3427 (US).			
(74) Agents: HANSON, Karl, G. et al.; Office of Intellectual Property Counsel, Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company, P.O. Box 33427, Saint Paul, MN 55133-3427 (US).			

(54) Title: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PERFORMING A SOLID-PHASE EXTRACTION UNDER PRESSURIZED CONDITIONS

(57) Abstract

A method of performing a solid phase extraction on an aqueous fluid using a hydrophobic, solid-phase extraction medium (40), which method comprises: (a) placing (10) a hydrophobic, solid phase extraction medium (40) inside of a pressurizable housing (18) having an inlet (25) and an outlet (32), the hydrophobic, solid-phase extraction medium (40) being positioned in the pressurizable housing (18) such that a liquid moving from the inlet (25) to the outlet (32) passes through the solid-phase extraction medium (40); (b) priming (12) the hydrophobic, solid-phase extraction medium (40) with a water-miscible organic liquid by passing the water-miscible organic liquid from the inlet (25) to the outlet (32) under positive pressure; and (c) passing (14) an aqueous liquid from the inlet (25) to the outlet (32) under positive pressure; wherein the water-miscible organic liquid and aqueous liquid are passed from the inlet (25) to the outlet (32) such that the solid-phase extraction medium (40) is completely and continuously immersed in liquid in the pressurizable housing (18) during steps (b) and (c).



FOR THE PURPOSES OF INFORMATION ONLY

Codes used to identify States party to the PCT on the front pages of pamphlets publishing international applications under the PCT.

AT	Austria	GB	United Kingdom	MR	Mauritania
AU	Australia	GE	Georgia	MW	Malawi
BB	Barbados	GN	Guinea	NE	Niger
BE	Belgium	GR	Greece	NL	Netherlands
BF	Burkina Faso	HU	Hungary	NO	Norway
BG	Bulgaria	IE	Ireland	NZ	New Zealand
BJ	Benin	IT	Italy	PL	Poland
BR	Brazil	JP	Japan	PT	Portugal
BY	Belarus	KE	Kenya	RO	Romania
CA	Canada	KG	Kyrgyzstan	RU	Russian Federation
CF	Central African Republic	KP	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	SD	Sudan
CG	Congo	KR	Republic of Korea	SE	Sweden
CH	Switzerland	KZ	Kazakhstan	SI	Slovenia
CI	Côte d'Ivoire	LI	Liechtenstein	SK	Slovakia
CM	Cameroon	LK	Sri Lanka	SN	Senegal
CN	China	LU	Luxembourg	TD	Chad
CS	Czechoslovakia	LV	Latvia	TG	Togo
CZ	Czech Republic	MC	Monaco	TJ	Tajikistan
DE	Germany	MD	Republic of Moldova	TT	Trinidad and Tobago
DK	Denmark	MG	Madagascar	UA	Ukraine
ES	Spain	ML	Mali	US	United States of America
FI	Finland	MN	Mongolia	UZ	Uzbekistan
FR	France			VN	Viet Nam
GA	Gabon				

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PERFORMING A SOLID-PHASE EXTRACTION UNDER PRESSURIZED CONDITIONS

5

10 The present invention pertains to a method and apparatus for performing a solid-phase extraction through a hydrophobic, solid-phase extraction medium under pressurized conditions.

15 Solid-phase extraction (SPE) is a popular and growing technique for preparing samples for analysis. Sometimes referred to as liquid-solid extraction, SPE involves the use of a membrane or other medium that has sorptive properties. A fluid is passed through the SPE medium, and various materials in the fluid are extracted onto the SPE medium by being sorbed thereon or therein. The extracted molecular compounds can be removed from the SPE medium by desorbing the solids with an elution solvent to enable subsequent analysis of the compounds for composition, concentration, and the like. SPE is rapid, less labor-intensive than conventional liquid-liquid
20 extractions, and it eliminates the need for large volumes of potentially hazardous or expensive solvents. Examples of the many applications for which SPE is used include determining trace amounts of pesticides in river water, analyzing for pollutants in waste water, isolating organic compounds from ground water, and pretreatment of urine samples.

25 While SPE has been met with increasing popularity in the analytical art, problems have been encountered in performing a SPE in a pressurized system using a hydrophobic SPE medium. When an aqueous liquid is passed through the hydrophobic SPE medium under a positive pressure, for example by use of a pump, the liquid frequently contains air bubbles which can come into contact with the SPE medium. When air contacts the hydrophobic SPE
30 medium, the aqueous liquid will no longer wet that portion of the SPE medium. This minimizes or reduces the useful surface area of the SPE medium, and can increase processing time for a given volume of liquid, particularly when the processed liquid contains a high concentration of suspended solids. The reduction in useful surface area also can cause the SPE
35 medium to lose capacity for extracted solubles. When loss of capacity occurs, solubles which would normally be sorbed by the SPE medium pass

therethrough undetected. This undetected passage of solubles is referred to as "breakthrough", and it results in inaccurate analyses.

The present invention provides a method of performing SPE under pressurized conditions which prevents air from making contact with the SPE medium. The method therefore assures that essentially the whole surface area of the SPE medium is operative during the extraction so that processing time is minimized and breakthrough does not occur.

Briefly, the method of the invention comprises:

(a) placing a hydrophobic, solid-phase extraction medium inside of a pressurizable housing having an inlet and an outlet, the hydrophobic, solid-phase extraction medium being positioned in the pressurizable housing such that a liquid moving from the inlet to the outlet passes through the solid-phase extraction medium;

(b) priming the hydrophobic, solid-phase extraction medium with a water-miscible organic liquid by passing the water-miscible organic liquid from the inlet to the outlet under positive pressure; and

(c) passing an aqueous liquid from the inlet to the outlet under positive pressure;

wherein the water-miscible organic liquid and aqueous liquid are passed from the inlet to the outlet such that the solid-phase extraction medium is completely and continuously immersed in liquid in the pressurizable housing during steps (b) and (c).

The apparatus of the invention comprises:

(a) a pressurizable housing having an inlet and an outlet;

(b) a hydrophobic, solid-phase extraction medium disposed in the housing such that a liquid moving from the inlet to the outlet passes through the solid-phase extraction medium, the hydrophobic solid-phase extraction medium comprising a polytetrafluorethylene fibril matrix having sorptive particles enmeshed therein;

(c) a means for causing the liquid to pass from the inlet to the outlet under pressurized conditions; and

(d) a means for maintaining the hydrophobic, solid-phase extraction medium completely immersed in the liquid while the liquid is passing from the inlet to the outlet.

In the method and apparatus of this invention the hydrophobic SPE medium is kept completely immersed and continuously in liquid from the time

of priming the hydrophobic medium until the aqueous liquid has been fully processed. Air is thereby precluded from making substantial contact with the SPE medium, and the whole surface of the SPE medium can be utilized during the SPE process. A liquid layer can be maintained over the SPE medium throughout fluid processing using one of the three different approaches, briefly described here.

In a first approach the pressurized or upstream side of the SPE medium is vented to the atmosphere until a liquid layer builds up over the surface of the hydrophobic SPE medium. After the liquid layer has a sufficient depth, the vent to the atmosphere is closed so that as additional liquid is pumped into the housing, pressure increases in the housing and forces the liquid to flow evenly through the hydrophobic SPE medium.

In a second approach the housing outlet has a restriction which reduces the liquid flow exiting the housing and thereby causes a liquid layer to build up in the housing which completely immerses the hydrophobic SPE medium. The restriction is fashioned to permit liquid to flow from the outlet only when enough liquid is present in the housing to completely cover the hydrophobic SPE medium.

In a third approach the SPE medium itself is used to restrict the fluid flow through the housing to allow a liquid layer to build up over the SPE medium. The housing is sized to provide room for a compressible air column over the SPE medium. When the liquid layer has sufficient depth to immerse the SPE medium, the air in the column above the SPE medium will exert sufficient pressure to overcome the resistance of the SPE medium, and the liquid will flow evenly therethrough.

In each of the described approaches, air does not come into contact with the SPE medium. Essentially the whole surface of the SPE medium can participate in the SPE process to enable quick, even flow of liquid through the SPE medium without breakthrough.

The above and other novel features and advantages of the invention are more fully described in the detailed description of the invention and drawings. It is to be expressly understood, however, that the description and drawings are for the purposes of illustrating the invention and are not to be read in a manner that would unduly limit the scope of the invention.

FIG. 1 is a flow diagram generally illustrating the steps involved in the method of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of an assembly 16 useful in the method of the present invention.

5 FIG. 3 is a sectional view of assembly 16 useful in the method of the present invention.

FIG. 1 illustrates the sequence of steps that are employed in the present invention. In a first step 10, a hydrophobic SPE medium is placed in a pressurizable housing that has an inlet and an outlet. As used in here, the term "hydrophobic SPE medium" means a fluid-permeable mass that has sorptive properties and lacks an affinity for water. Generally speaking, a SPE medium is hydrophobic when it has a surface energy in the range of 20 to 300 millinewtons per meter (mN/M), more typically in the range of 50 to 250
10 mN/M. The SPE medium is positioned in the housing such that a liquid passing from the inlet to the outlet flows through the SPE medium. The housing is pressurizable so that the liquid can be forced through the SPE medium by exerting a positive pressure on the liquid on the upstream side of the SPE medium. The term "positive pressure" means a pressure greater than
15 one atmosphere (1.01325×10^5 pascals).
20 After the hydrophobic SPE medium has been placed in the pressurizable housing, the SPE medium is primed 12 so that an aqueous liquid can be subsequently passed therethrough. The priming of SPE medium can be accomplished by passing a water-miscible organic liquid through the SPE

25 medium. See D. Hagen et al., 236 Membrane Approach to Solid-Phase Extractions 157-164, 159 (1990). The term "water-miscible" means the organic liquid is soluble in water; that is, at least 5 percent by volume dissolves in water at standard temperature and pressure. Preferred water-miscible organic solvents are soluble in water at all concentrations from 0
30 weight percent to 100 weight percent. Examples of suitable, water-miscible organic liquids include alcohols such as methanol, ethanol, and isopropanol; ketones such as acetone; acetonitrile; amides such as formamide and N,N-dimethylformamide; sulfoxides such as dimethylsulfoxide; and sulfones such as dimethyl sulfone. The priming of the hydrophobic SPE medium is
35 carried out in a manner that allows the SPE medium to be completely immersed in the water-miscible organic liquid.

While the SPE medium is still immersed in the water-miscible organic liquid, the aqueous liquid that is to be subjected to the SPE process is fed 14 through the inlet into the housing. The aqueous liquid is continuously fed 14 under pressure into the housing to displace the water-miscible organic liquid from the SPE medium and cause the SPE medium to remain continuously immersed in aqueous liquid until the SPE process is complete. Air does not make contact with the SPE medium to render any substantial portion thereof not penetratable to fluid flow. The aqueous liquid can be any aqueous liquid capable of being processed by the SPE medium. Typical examples include river water, waste water, ground water, tap water, urine samples, etcetera.

The hydrophobic SPE medium may be any known or later developed hydrophobic SPE medium suitable for use in a pressurized system. Particularly suitable hydrophobic SPE media are Empore™ disks (3M, St. Paul, Minnesota). Examples of known hydrophobic SPE media have been disclosed in the following patents: U.S. 5,147,539; U.S. 5,017,610; U.S. 4,971,736; U.S. 4,906,378; U.S. 4,810,381; and WO 93/00163, the disclosures of which are incorporated here by reference. The SPE media may comprise a fibrous or fibril structure, for example, a polytetrafluoroethylene fibril matrix, having sorptive, hydrophobic, particles enmeshed therein. The term "matrix" means an open-structured entangled mass of fibers. To demonstrate hydrophobicity, the particulate material can have a low surface polarity, in the range of about 0.1 to 0.5, and may be substantially insoluble in water or in the elution solvent. The particulate material can be an organic compound, a polymer, or an inorganic oxide such as silica, alumina, titania, zirconia, and other ceramics, or it can be an ion exchange resin or chelating particles. Preferred particulate material are silica and zirconia, with silica being particularly preferred because of the ease of bonding a variety of hydrophobic and semi-hydrophobic coatings onto its surface.

Suitable particles for use in an SPE media include any particle which can be coated with insoluble sorbent material or the surface (external and/or internal) of which can be derivatized to provide a coating of insoluble sorbent material. Preferred supports for such coatings include inorganic oxide particles, most preferably silica particles. The insoluble sorbent coatings generally have a thickness in the range of one molecular monolayer to about 300 micrometers. Such particles having coated surfaces are well known in the art, see, for example, Snyder and Kirkland, "Introduction to Modern Liquid

Chromatography", 2d Ed., John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (1979) and H. Figge et al., "Journal of Chromatography" 351 (1986) 393-408. Coatings which can be applied to silica particulate can be either thin mechanical coatings of insoluble polymers such as crosslinked silicones, polybutadienes, et cetera, or covalently bonded organic groups such as aliphatic groups of varying chain length and aliphatic and aromatic groups containing amine, nitrile, hydroxyl, chiral, and other functionalities which alter the polarity of the coating.

The particulate material may have a spherical shape, a oblate or prolate shape, an irregular shape, or combinations and variations thereof. Particulate material useful in the invention has a size in the range of 0.1 to about 600 micrometers, preferably in the range of 1 to 100 micrometers.

FIGs. 2 and 3 illustrate an example of an assembly that may be used in the above-described method. Assembly 16 includes a pressurizable housing 18 that has a first-half 20 and a second-half 22. An inlet tube 24 is attached to an inlet 25 of the first-half 20 of housing 18 by a threaded fitting 26. Inlet tube 24 can communicate with a pump (not shown) which feeds a liquid to the housing under positive pressure. Inlet 25 passes through a feed portion 28 in the first-half 20 of housing 18 to direct a liquid to the interior of housing 18. A vent 30 is located in the first-half 20 of housing 18 to enable air to be released or displaced from the interior of housing 18 when the liquid layer has reached a satisfactory level in housing 18. An O-ring 31 is provided to hermetically seal the first-half 20 to the second-half 22 to provide a pressurizable housing 18. Second-half 22 of housing 18 has an outlet 32 through which the liquid passes to exit housing 18. A threaded fitting 34 is secured to an exit portion 36 in the second-half 22 of housing 18. An exit tube (not shown) may be placed in communication with outlet 32 via threaded fitting 34.

A disk support plate 38 can be employed in housing 18 to uphold a disk assembly 39 in a planar format. Disk assembly 39 includes fluid-permeable, porous sheets 42 and 44 disposed on opposite sides of SPE membrane 40. Porous sheets 42 and 44 are optional but sheet 42 may be employed as a prefilter or both sheets 42 and 44 may be used to create sufficient back pressure to cause the disk to become fully immersed in liquid. Outlet 32 may have a restrictor 46 located therein which enables a higher pressure to be achieved inside of housing 18. A cut-out portion 47 may be

provided in second-half 20 of housing 18 to facilitate removal of the disk assembly 39 from housing 18.

5 To assure that a liquid passes through the SPE membrane 40 while that liquid is passing through housing 18, the first-half 20 can be provided with an annular flange 48 which projects towards the second-half 20 of housing 18 to retain the SPE membrane in a fixed position against support plate 38. Support plate 38 preferably has a structure such as disclosed in U.S. Application Serial No. 08/027,079. A support plate of the construction of the Hoopman application has a plurality of concentric grooves that are intersected by a
10 plurality of radially extending grooves. Fluid exit holes are disposed in some of the radially extending grooves at the peripheral end of the groove. This support plate assists in evenly distributing fluid flow through the SPE membrane. Improved fluid distribution can also be obtained by installing a spray head (not shown) where the inlet 25 makes full communication with the interior of housing 18 at location 50. The spray head may take the form of a threaded machine screw that has at least one slot extending through the threads of the screw. The machine screw is threaded into inlet 25 at location
15 50. Fluid passes from inlet 25, through the slot in the bolt to strike the screw's head and be distributed over the surface of the SPE medium. An Example of another spray head that may be suitable is disclosed in U.S. Patent 4,944,876.
20

In operation, the SPE disk can be immersed in the liquid that is passing therethrough by venting housing 18 to the atmosphere until a liquid layer builds up over the surface of the disk. After the liquid layer is thick enough,
25 the vent 30 to the atmosphere is closed, and additional liquid is pumped into the housing causing an increase in pressure which forces the liquid evenly through the disk 40. In lieu of a vent 30, a restrictor 46 can be employed in the outlet stream 32 to reduce liquid flow through the outlet and cause a liquid layer to build up in the housing 18. After enough liquid has built up in
30 housing 18, the pressure will overcome the resistance to flow caused by the restrictor 46, allowing the liquid to flow through the SPE disk 40. Examples of restrictors 46 that may be suitable for use in this invention include a plate with a small opening located therein, a porous metal or plastic plate, or any other device suitable for creating resistance to fluid flow, or the size of the
35 outlet 32 may be reduced to restrict flow. In a further embodiment neither a vent 30 nor a restrictor 46 is needed to cause the liquid to build up on the

surface of the SPE disk 40, but the disk assembly 39 or SPE medium 40 itself must supply sufficient resistance to fluid flow to allow a liquid layer to build up over the SPE disk. In this embodiment, the first-half 20 of housing 18 should be provided with an interior large enough to create a compressible air column over the disk assembly 39. When the liquid layer has sufficient depth, the air in the volume above the disk assembly 39 will exert sufficient pressure on the liquid to overcome the resistance of the disk. The liquid will then flow evenly through the SPE medium.

10

EXAMPLES

Example 1

A housing was designed for use with Empore™ disks which were 47 millimeters (mm) in diameter and 0.5 mm thick, available from Varian Sample Preparation Products, Harbour, California. A housing was constructed that had an inside diameter of 48 mm. A chamber was disposed above the membrane in the housing which was 45 mm in diameter and 30 mm high. The membrane was placed on a support plate having a construction similar to the support plate shown in FIGs. 1 and 2 of the above-cited Hoopman application. The support plate was a plastic disk machined from a piece of Kel-F™ Brand polychlorotrifluoroethylene (PCTFE) thermoplastic available from 3M Company, Industrial Chemical Products. There were approximately 86 concentric, radially-spaced grooves on the upstream side of the plate. The concentric, radially-spaced grooves were about 0.28 mm deep and were spaced at about 4 grooves per millimeter. In addition to the concentric grooves, radially-extending grooves were machined into the upstream surface of the support plate in the pattern shown in Hoopman FIGs. 1 and 2. Each radially-extending groove was approximately 0.5 mm wide and 0.5 to 0.75 mm deep. A vent, constructed of a plugged tube fitting 6 mm in diameter was built into the top of the chamber. The vent could be opened (vented) and closed as needed.

The purpose of this Example was several fold: (1) to prime the membrane; (2) to have the vent open while the membrane was primed (displacing air in the chamber); and (3) to determine if a water solution containing a blue dye would pass uniformly through a primed, solid-phase extraction membrane.

5 The membrane was primed with 10 milliliters (ml) of methanol while the vent was left open, allowing the disk to be immersed in methanol. The vent was then closed, and the membrane was further primed with an additional 10 ml of methanol. Then 10 ml of water were pumped into the housing to displace the methanol. Then 100 ml sample of water containing a blue dye was pumped through the membrane. The dye was an Alphazurine A dye, lot CZ01712CZ, available from Aldrich Chemical Company, Inc., Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The membrane remained completely and continuously immersed in liquid throughout the procedure. At the end of the procedure, a blast of high pressure air forced all of the liquid through the membrane. Upon visual examination, blue dye was seen to be evenly distributed over the entire surface of the membrane. No spots were observed which would indicate that air had contacted the solid-phase extraction medium. Thus, the method and apparatus of this invention demonstrated uniform flow through the membrane without permitting air to make contact with the same.

Example 2

20 This Example was performed in the same manner as Example 1, except the vent was left closed during the priming and extracting operations. The chamber above the membrane had sufficient volume to allow air in the chamber to be compressed to permit a layer of liquid to build up on the membrane and submerge the same.

25 After the extraction of the dye was complete, the Empore™ disk was visually examined. The blue dye was seen to be evenly distributed over the entire surface of the membrane. No spots were observed which would indicate that air had contacted the solid-phase extraction medium. Thus, the method and apparatus of this invention demonstrated uniform flow through the membrane without permitting air to make with the same.

Comparative Example 1

30 The purpose of this Example was to demonstrate that (i) the useful surface area of a hydrophobic, solid-phase extraction medium would be reduced and (ii) non-uniform flow through the solid-phase extraction medium would result, when the method and apparatus of the invention were not employed during a pressurized SPE.

This Example was performed in the same manner as Example 2, except the size of the chamber above the membrane was reduced. The chamber had the same diameter, but the height of the chamber was reduced to 1.3 mm from 30 mm. After the SPE process was completed, the SPE membrane was examined visually. There were large white spots on the membrane which covered approximately 25 to 35 percent of the membrane's surface area. The white or non-dyed areas represent the portions of the membrane through which the aqueous liquid did not penetrate the membrane. Thus, a reduction in useful surface area and a non-uniform flow was demonstrated by the pressurized system when the method and apparatus of the invention were not employed.

Example 3

The purpose of this Example was to quantitatively sorb onto an Empore™ disk a known quantity of the red dye Disperse 1 (available from Aldrich Chemical Co., Milwaukee, Wisconsin) in water by passing this aqueous solution through a primed membrane as described in Example 1 and then eluting the sorbed dye from the membrane and measuring the quantity of dye recovered. A one liter aqueous sample containing 100 micrograms of red dye was passed through the Empore™ disk. Three trials were performed on three separate Empore™ disks, and each disk was quantitatively eluted with methanol. The eluent was analyzed spectrophotometrically at 480 nanometers and was compared with a standard solution of the red dye. The percent recovery of the dye was for the three trials was 96.5%, 97.3%, and 99.3%, respectively, thereby demonstrating good recovery using the method and apparatus of this invention.

Example 4

The purpose of this Example was to quantitatively sorb onto the Empore™ membrane a known quantity of a plasticizer in water and measure the quantity of recovered plasticizer.

A one liter sample of a plasticizer in water (65 parts per billion) was passed through an Empore™ membrane, previously primed as described in Example 1. Each membrane was eluted with three 6 ml portions of acetonitrile. Recovery of the plasticizer was essentially quantitative as indicated in the table below.

<i>Plasticizer</i>	<i>Percent of Recovery</i>
Dimethyl phthalate*	98.0 +/- 3.0
Diethyl phthalate*	97.2 +/- 2.1
Dibutyl phthalate*	96.5 +/- 2.2
Diethyl phthalate*	94.4 +/- 6.8

*These plasticizers are commercially available from
Aldrich Chemical Co., Milwaukee, WI.

The data in the above table demonstrate that good analyte recoveries
can be obtained using the method and apparatus of this invention.

This invention may take on various modifications and alterations
without departing from the spirit and scope thereof. Accordingly, it is also
to be understood that this invention is not to be limited to the above-described,
but is to be controlled by the limitations set forth in the following claims and
any equivalents thereof. It is also to be understood that this invention may be
suitably practiced in the absence of any element not specifically disclosed
herein.

Claims:

1. A method of performing a solid phase extraction on an aqueous fluid using a hydrophobic, solid-phase extraction medium, which method
5 comprises:

(a) placing a hydrophobic, solid-phase extraction medium inside of a pressurizable housing having an inlet and an outlet, the hydrophobic, solid-phase extraction medium being positioned in the pressurizable housing such that a liquid moving from the inlet to the outlet passes through the solid-phase
10 extraction medium;

(b) priming the hydrophobic, solid-phase extraction medium with a water-miscible organic liquid by passing the water-miscible organic liquid from the inlet to the outlet under positive pressure; and

(c) passing an aqueous liquid from the inlet to the outlet under positive
15 pressure;

wherein the water-miscible organic liquid and aqueous liquid are passed from the inlet to the outlet such that the solid-phase extraction medium is completely and continuously immersed in liquid in the pressurizable housing during steps (b) and (c).
20

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the pressurizable housing is vented to atmosphere to reduce the pressure inside of the housing until the SPE medium becomes immersed in step (b).

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the vent is closed after the SPE medium is completely immersed in the water-miscible organic liquid.
25

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the outlet in the housing has a restriction to fluid flow to enable the solid-phase extraction medium to become completely and continuously immersed in liquid during steps (b) and (c).
30

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the solid-phase extraction medium, other fluid-permeable medium, or combinations thereof, are disposed in the housing to create sufficient back pressure to cause the solid-phase extraction medium to become completely and continuously immersed in during steps (b) and (c).
35

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the hydrophobic, solid-phase extraction medium is a polytetrafluoroethylene fibril matrix having sorptive, hydrophobic particles enmeshed therein.

5 7. An apparatus for performing a solid-phase extraction, which comprises:

(a) a pressurizable housing having an inlet and an outlet;

(b) a hydrophobic, solid-phase extraction medium disposed in the housing such that a liquid moving from the inlet to the outlet passes through the solid-phase extraction medium, the hydrophobic solid-phase extraction medium comprising a polytetrafluoroethylene fibril matrix having hydrophobic, sorptive particles enmeshed therein;

(c) a means for causing the liquid to pass from the inlet to the outlet under pressurized conditions; and

15 (d) a means for maintaining the hydrophobic, solid-phase extraction medium completely immersed in the liquid while the liquid is passing from the inlet to the outlet.

FIG.1

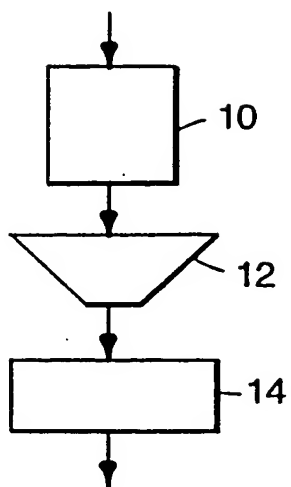


FIG.3

18

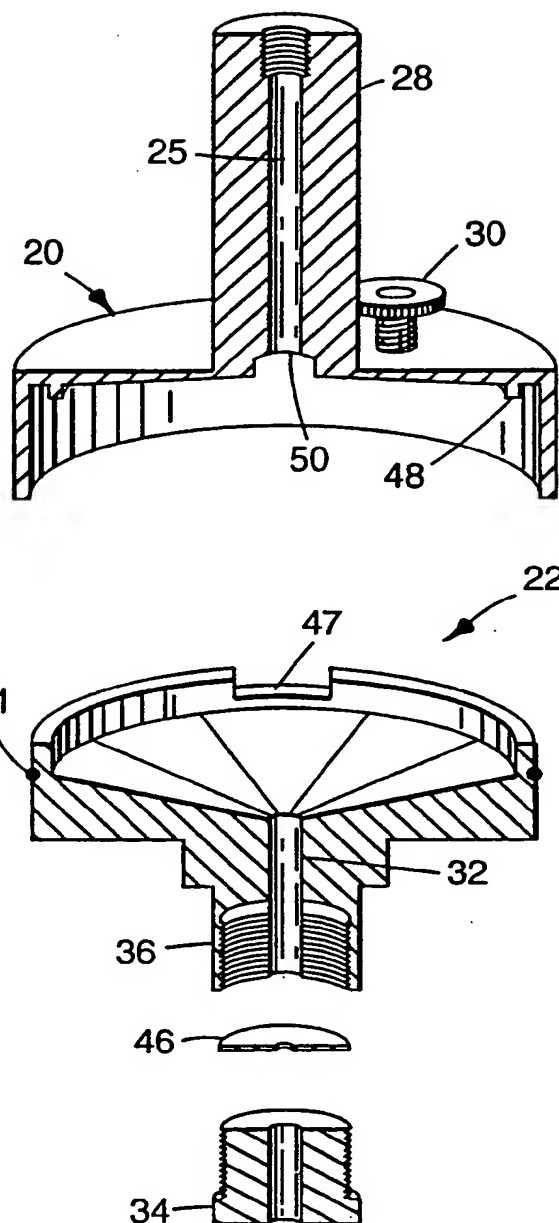
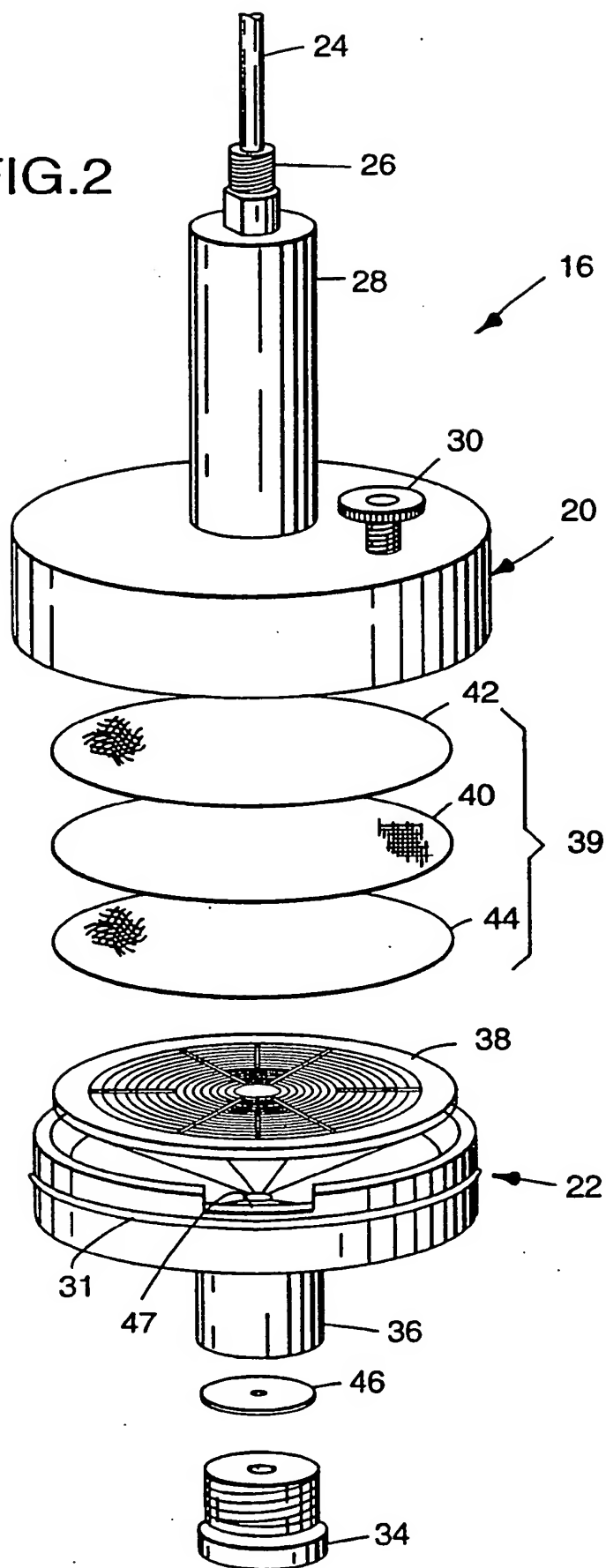


FIG.2



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.

PCT/US 94/00472

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
 IPC 5 B01D11/04 B01D61/00

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 5 B01D

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US,A,5 124 041 (SHEER ET AL.) 23 June 1992 see column 6, line 21 - line 42; claims; figures 1,3 ---	7
A	US,A,4 789 468 (SIRKAR) 6 December 1988 ---	
A	EP,A,0 246 065 (CELANESE CORP.) 19 November 1987 ---	
A	EP,A,0 213 744 (CELANESE CORP.) 11 March 1987 -----	

☐

Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒

Patent family members are listed in annex.

* Special categories of cited documents :

- *A* document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
- *E* earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
- *L* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
- *O* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
- *P* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

- *T* later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
- *X* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
- *Y* document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.
- *&* document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

23 March 1994

Date of mailing of the international search report

31. 03. 94

Name and mailing address of the ISA

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2
 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
 Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,
 Fax (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Plaka, T

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/US 94/00472

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US-A-5124041	23-06-92	NONE	
US-A-4789468	06-12-88	CA-A- 1271428 US-A- 4997569	10-07-90 05-03-91
EP-A-0246065	19-11-87	US-A- 4966707 AU-B- 599377 AU-A- 7265787 DE-A- 3782086 JP-A- 62279803 ZA-A- 8703432	30-10-90 19-07-90 19-11-87 12-11-92 04-12-87 06-11-87
EP-A-0213744	11-03-87	CA-A- 1318992 DE-A- 3686619 JP-C- 1781831 JP-B- 4070046 JP-A- 62038222 US-A- 4973434 US-A- 5110326	15-06-93 08-10-92 13-08-93 09-11-92 19-02-87 27-11-90 05-05-92

THIS PAGE BLANK (USPTO)